SPIDER-MAN
FAIRY TALES
MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
1 OF 4

Once upon a time, in the dark woods of a faraway land...
"I WAS ABOUT HALFWAY THROUGH MY DELIVERIES LAST WEEK, WHEN I WAS SUDDENLY SET UPON BY THIEVES!
"IT WAS THOSE DASTARDLY SWEET-TOOTH SIBLINGS, LOOKING TO PLUCK ANOTHER SUGARY SCORE FROM MY BASKET.
"HAVING LEARNED MY LESSON THE LAST TIME, I WAS PREPARED AND TRIED TO FIGHT BACK, BUT THEY WERE DOUBLE-DIPPED AND I WAS OVERCOME.
"WHEN SUDDENLY, FROM OUT OF THE TREETOPS..."
TRYING TO SNEAK DESSERT BEFORE DINNER AGAIN, KIDS?

"...MY SAVIOR APPEARED.
"FASTER THAN ONE COULD SAY 'MOLASSES'...
WELL, I'VE GOT THE GUM-"DROP" ON YOU!
AND HERE'S A LOLLI-"POP" FOR YOU!
"...THOSE CANDY-STEALING CULPRITS GOT WHAT WAS COMING TO THEM.
"I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT CAVITIES, EITHER...
"HE WAS SIMPLY AMAZING!
IT'S A SHAME TO HAVE TO WASTE GOOD LICORICE LIKE THIS.
BUT I PREFER RED MYSELF, ACTUALLY...
YOU'D BEST GET BACK TO YOUR VILLAGE AND REPORT THIS BEFORE THEY WAKE UP AND EAT THEMSELVES OUT OF THEIR BONDS, MA'AM.
"HE WAS GONE JUST AS QUICKLY AS HE APPEARED..."

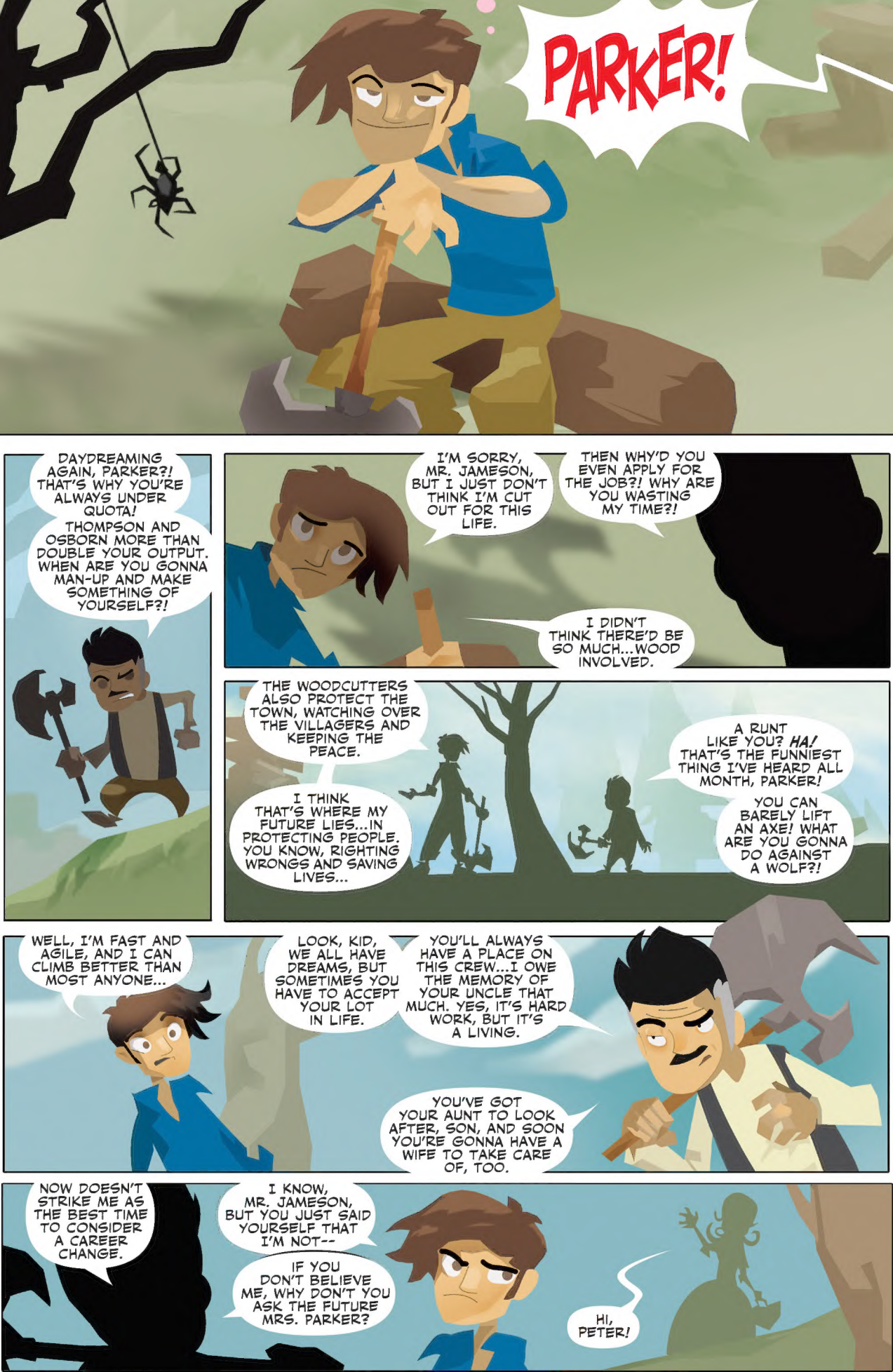
...MELTING LIKE CHOCOLATE INTO THE DARK SHADOWS OF THE FOREST.
A "SWEET" STORY INDEED, MISS BRANT...
...BUT WHEN THE WOODCUTTERS RETURNED TO THE ALLEGED CRIME SCENE, THEY FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF YOUR PURPORTED PERPETRATORS OR SUPPOSED SAVIOR, DID THEY?
NO, MR. JAMESON, THE CHILDREN MUST HAVE WOKEN UP AND CHEWED THROUGH--
OR MAYBE SOMEONE HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH SUGAR IN HER SYSTEM THAT AFTERNOON, EH?
NOW IF YOU'D KINDLY RETURN TO YOUR SEAT...
BUT I BAKED COOKIES FOR EVERYONE!
SPIDER COOKIES?
YOU PEOPLE THINK SYMBOLS ARE GOING TO PROTECT YOU? YOU THINK THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU DISPLAY THIS MARK YOU'LL ALL BE SAFE?
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?!
THERE IS NO MYSTERIOUS "SPIDER-MAN" OUT THERE WATCHING OVER US!
YES, WE MIGHT HAVE SOME MASKED VIGILANTE RUNNING AROUND IN THE FOREST, AND IF THAT'S THE CASE...
...HE'S A *MENACE* WHO'S UNDERMINING THE WOODCUTTERS' EFFORTS TO PROTECT OUR VILLAGE!
A MENACE I INTEND TO *SQUASH* LIKE THE BUG THAT HE IS!!

FAIRY STORIES ARE THE LAST THINGS WE NEED SPREADING AT A TIME LIKE THIS. WE CANNOT BE LULLED INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY!
EVERYONE NEEDS TO BE ON FULL ALERT, GIVEN THE WOLVES THAT HAVE BEEN TERRORIZING THE VILLAGE THESE PAST FEW MONTHS.
I DON'T THINK I NEED TO REMIND ANYONE HERE THAT WE'VE ALREADY LOST ONE OF OUR OWN!
WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER POOR GIRL FALLING VICTIM TO THESE RUTHLESS PREDATORS!!
IF THIS SO-CALLED "SPIDER-MAN" DOES EXIST...WHO KNOWS, MAYBE HE'S IN CAHOOTS WITH THE WOLVES!
IT COULD BE THAT *HE'S* RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO GWEN STACY!
YEAH, WE SHOULD CATCH THIS "SPIDER"!
LURING HELPLESS GIRLS INTO HIS *OWN* WEB, I BET!
LET'S SHOW HIM WHO'S THE REAL LAW IN THIS TOWN!

PLEASE SIT DOWN, PETER. YOU KNOW HOW MR. JAMESON GETS.
HE'S SIMPLY BLOWING OFF STEAM. THERE'S NO REASON TO GET YOURSELF ALL WORKED UP.
I KNOW, MARY JANE. I'M SORRY. IT REALLY BOTHERS ME HOW HE TRIES TO GET PEOPLE TO LIVE IN FEAR.
WELL, DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT ME. "SPIDER-MAN" OR NOT, I'M NOT GOING TO LET HIM SCARE ME. I KNOW HOW TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!
JONAH MAY BE AN OLD *WINDBAG*, BUT HE DOES HAVE THE SAFETY OF THE VILLAGE IN MIND.
AND SOON YOU'LL HAVE A BIG, STRONG HUSBAND TO LOOK AFTER YOU, MARY JANE. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, PETER?
WE'RE NOT MARRIED YET, MOTHER, AND UNTIL WE ARE, PETER STILL NEEDS TO LOOK AFTER HIS AUNT MAY FIRST.
THE MEN IN THIS VILLAGE HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE CARE OF *ALL* THE WOMEN IN THEIR LIVES, MARY JANE.
AND I'M SO SORRY TO HEAR MAY HASN'T BEEN FEELING WELL, PETER. MAYBE MARY JANE CAN PAY HER A VISIT WITH A BASKET OF GOODIES TO HELP CHEER HER UP?
I'M SURE SHE'D LOVE THAT, THANKS. AS LONG AS IT'S *NO TROUBLE*, I MEAN...
I'D LOVE TO SEE YOUR AUNT MAY, PETER.
IT WILL BE NO TROUBLE AT ALL...

The next day...
AH, FELICIA... ONCE I MARRY PETER, WILL I FINALLY BE ABLE TO STEP OUT FROM UNDER MY MOTHER'S WING?
OR WILL I ONLY BE TRADING THE ROLE OF AN OBEDIENT DAUGHTER FOR THAT OF A DOTING WIFE?
WHEN WILL I FINALLY GET TO BE ME?
I ENVY YOU, COMING AND GOING AS YOU PLEASE...LIVING YOUR LIFE ON YOUR OWN TERMS. THAT'S THE KIND OF INDEPENDENCE I WANT.
THE TRADITIONS IN THIS TOWN JUST MAKE ME WANT TO SCREAM SOMETIMES!
FOR ONCE, I DON'T WANT TO DO WHAT'S EXPECTED OF ME!
IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T WANT TO MARRY PETER. I DO. I LOVE HIM WITH ALL MY HEART.
I WANT TO BE HIS WIFE. I WANT TO BE HIS PARTNER. BUT I ALSO WANT TO BE HIS EQUAL.
meoooow.
=SIGH= WE ALL KNOW HOW TRADITION TREATS WOMEN HERE, THOUGH.
BUT WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO SIMPLY GO FROM BEING MISS WATSON TO MRS. PARKER?
WHAT IF I WANT TO BE MARY JANE?

MJ Gwen
BFF
OH, GWEN...
...I MISS YOU.
YOU NEVER CARED WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THOUGHT OF YOU. YOU WERE NEVER AFRAID TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF.
AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO HER!
LIKE IT OR NOT, WE ALL HAVE PATHS WE MUST TRAVEL IN THIS LIFE, MARY JANE.
WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE STRONG AND FOLLOW THE COURSE LAID OUT BEFORE US...
...OR STRAY OFF THE PATH AND FALL VICTIM TO OUR FEARS AND WEAKNESSES, LIKE POOR GWEN DID.
WITH NO ONE TO SAVE HER...
I KNOW, MOM, BUT--
NO MORE "BUTS", YOUNG LADY. YOU REALLY NEED TO BE GOING. YOU DON'T WANT TO KEEP PETER'S POOR AUNT MAY WAITING. SHE'LL BE FAMILY SOON, AFTER ALL.
AND PLEASE, MARY JANE...
...PLEASE STAY ON THE PATH!


PARKER!
DAYDREAMING AGAIN, PARKER?! THAT'S WHY YOU'RE ALWAYS UNDER QUOTA!
THOMPSON AND OSBORN MORE THAN DOUBLE YOUR OUTPUT. WHEN ARE YOU GONNA MAN-UP AND MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF?!
I'M SORRY, MR. JAMESON, BUT I JUST DON'T THINK I'M CUT OUT FOR THIS LIFE.
THEN WHY'D YOU EVEN APPLY FOR THE JOB?! WHY ARE YOU WASTING MY TIME?!
I DIDN'T THINK THERE'D BE SO MUCH...WOOD INVOLVED.
THE WOODCUTTERS ALSO PROTECT THE TOWN, WATCHING OVER THE VILLAGERS AND KEEPING THE PEACE.
I THINK THAT'S WHERE MY FUTURE LIES...IN PROTECTING PEOPLE. YOU KNOW, RIGHTING WRONGS AND SAVING LIVES...
A RUNT LIKE YOU? HA! THAT'S THE FUNNIEST THING I'VE HEARD ALL MONTH, PARKER!
YOU CAN BARELY LIFT AN AXE! WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO AGAINST A WOLF?!
WELL, I'M FAST AND AGILE, AND I CAN CLIMB BETTER THAN MOST ANYONE...
LOOK, KID, WE ALL HAVE DREAMS, BUT SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT YOUR LOT IN LIFE.
YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE ON THIS CREW...I OWE THE MEMORY OF YOUR UNCLE THAT MUCH. YES, IT'S HARD WORK, BUT IT'S A LIVING.
YOU'VE GOT YOUR AUNT TO LOOK AFTER, SON, AND SOON YOU'RE GONNA HAVE A WIFE TO TAKE CARE OF, TOO.
NOW DOESN'T STRIKE ME AS THE BEST TIME TO CONSIDER A CAREER CHANGE.
I KNOW, MR. JAMESON, BUT YOU JUST SAID YOURSELF THAT I'M NOT--
IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, WHY DON'T YOU ASK THE FUTURE MRS. PARKER?
HI, PETER!

GOOD MORNING, MR. JAMESON.
TO WHAT DO WE OWE THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY TODAY, MISS WATSON?
I'M GOING TO DROP IN ON PETER'S AUNT MAY TO SEE IF SHE'S FEELING ANY BETTER. HOPEFULLY, A FRIENDLY FACE WILL HELP LIFT HER SPIRITS.
MAY HASN'T BEEN FEELING WELL? I'M SORRY TO HEAR IT. GOOD THING HER NEPHEW HAS A STEADY JOB AND CAN LOOK AFTER HIS FAMILY. RIGHT, PETER?

WATCH YOURSELF OUT IN THOSE WOODS, MARY JANE.
AND DON'T DAWDLE, PARKER! YOU'RE STILL BEHIND QUOTA!
ON MY WAY IN JUST A MINUTE, SIR!
...
I'M...I'M SO SORRY, MARY JANE.

SORRY FOR WHAT, PETER?
IT'S JUST... I WISH I COULD DO MORE FOR YOU. FOR US...
YOU KNOW... I REALLY...I WANT TO DO SOMETHING THAT WILL MAKE YOU PROUD OF ME.
OH, PETER...

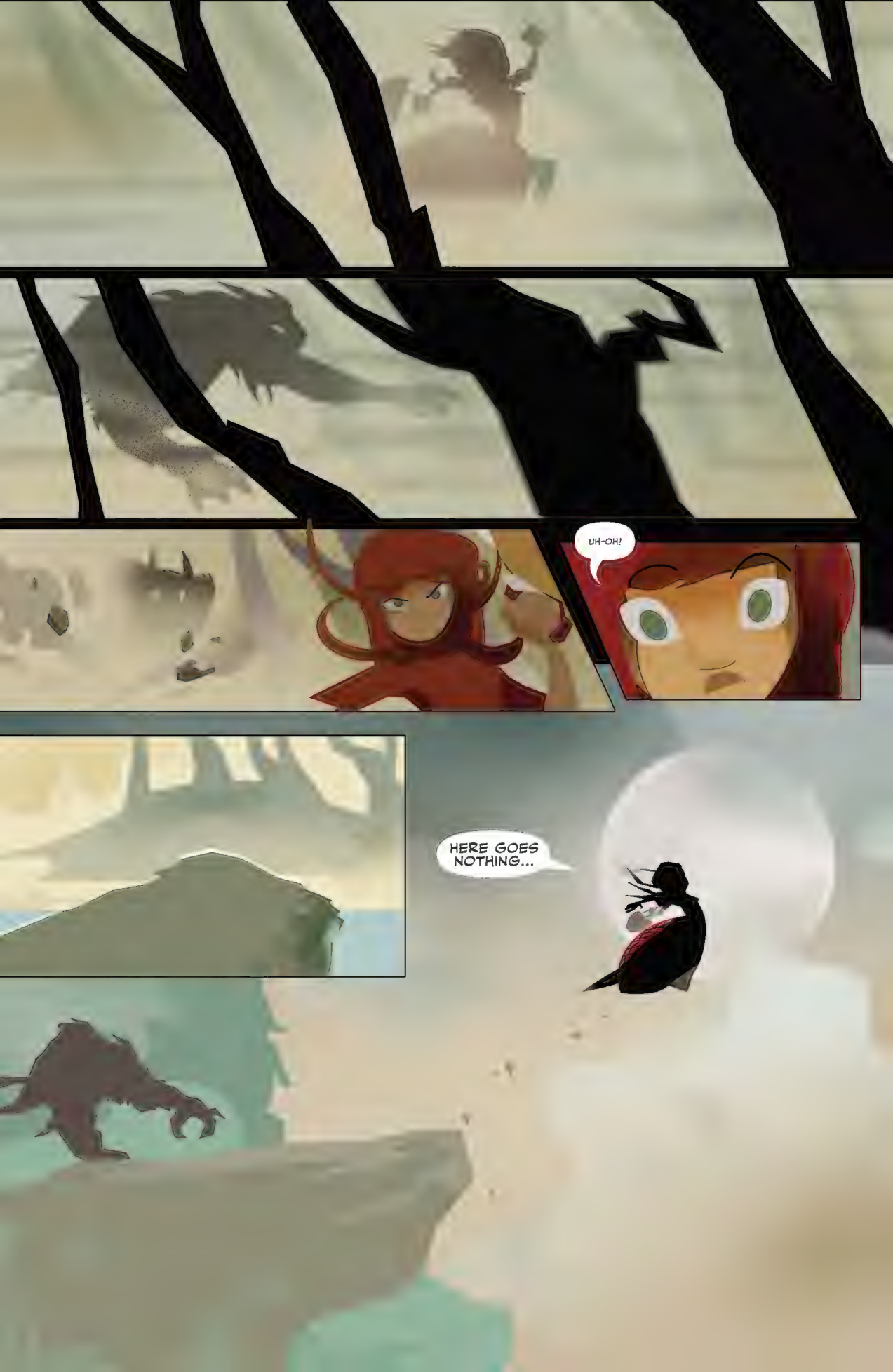
YOU DO. EVERY DAY.
JUST KNOWING YOU'RE THERE FOR ME MAKES ME THE PROUDEST GIRL IN THE VILLAGE.

FACE IT, TIGER. I HIT THE JACKPOT!

I HAVE TO GO. I DON'T WANT TO KEEP YOUR AUNT WAITING.
TELL HER I'LL BE HOME FOR DINNER.
I'LL SEE YOU ON MY WAY BACK, PETER.
BE CAREFUL, MARY JANE!
=SIGH=
HOW LONG WILL SIMPLY BEING THERE FOR HER BE ENOUGH?
SHE MAY NOT BE AROUND LONG AT ALL, BOY.
YOU MAY BE HERS NOW, "TIGER", BUT SOON---
---SHE'S GONNA BE ALL ABOUT THE WOLF.

"MARY JANE PARKER"...IT DOES HAVE A KIND OF RING TO IT--
SNAP
HELLO? WHO'S THERE?!
I DON'T HAVE ANY CANDY IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
HEH HEH HEH HEH
SUGAR TENDS TO ROT MY TEETH!
I MUCH PREFER TO EAT RAW MEAT!!

IT WOULD BE IN YOUR BEST INTERESTS, KIND SIR... TO ALLOW ME SAFE PASSAGE...
...FOR YOU SEE, MY FIANCE IS RIGHT BEHIND ME...A WOODCUTTER WHO CARRIES THIS BIG AXE... AND YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO MAKE HIM ANGRY.
TRYING TO BLUFF THE BIG, BAD WOLF... MARY JANE? NICE TRY!
IT LOOKED TO ME LIKE JAMESON'S KEEPING POOR PETER PLENTY BUSY CHOPPING WOOD!
ANY OTHER LIES YOU CARE TO TELL?
I PROMISED HER I'D STAY ON THE PATH!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, IF THIS IS THE END FOR ME, THERE IS ONE OTHER LITTLE WHITE LIE I'D LIKE TO GET OFF MY CHEST.
ONE I TOLD MY MOTHER ACTUALLY...
DO TELL?


UH-OH!
HERE GOES NOTHING...

KRISH
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE STAYED ON THE PATH...
THWANG
THWOK
UNNFFF!
SHOOT
MY BASKET MAY BE A WASH, BUT MAY'S HOUSE IS STILL CLOSER THAN HOME...
LUCKY LITTLE GIRL!
HEADING BACK TO YOUR PRECIOUS PATH WON'T SAVE YOU. THERE'S NO ESCAPING ME NOW...

"...ESPECIALLY WHEN I KNOW WHERE YOU'RE HEADED!"
PARKER
AUNT MAY?
IT'S ME, MARY JANE! SORRY FOR BARGING IN LIKE THIS...
IT'S A BIT OF AN EMERGENCY!!
AUNT MAY?! ARE YOU HERE?
I'M UPSTAIRS, MY DEAR.
DON'T FORGET TO LOCK THE DOOR BEHIND YOU.
ka-CHIK
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, AUNT MAY? YOU SOUND HOARSE. CAN I GET YOU SOME TEA?
NO, I'M FINE. MY COLD HAS JUST MOVED DOWN TO MY THROAT...
YOU LOOK... BIGGER, AUNT MAY. ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?
YES, YES... JUST PILED HIGH WITH BLANKETS TO STAVE OFF THE COLD.
AUNT MAY! YOU'RE ALL HOT AND SWEATY AND...
...AND HAIRY?

HAHAHAHA
AIIIEEEE!!!
BE STRONG, MARY JANE!
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T WARN YOU SOONER, DEAR.
RUN! GO GET HELP! FIND PETER!
YOU LADIES WILL FIND NO HELP IN THESE WOODS!
THE TIME FOR GAMES IS OVER, GIRLIE! YOU TRICKED ME ONCE...
...BUT I'M THROUGH PLAYING WITH MY FOOD!
WHIISSH
SLAASH
YOU'VE GOT TIME FOR ONE FINAL SCREAM IF IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER...
I REFUSE TO GIVE YOU THAT SATISFACTION!

I REFUSE TO GIVE INTO MY FEARS!
YOU REDHEADS GOT MORE FIGHT IN YOU THAN THE BLONDES, I SEE. NO MATTER.
SCREAM OR NO SCREAM, FEAR OR NO FEAR---
---YOU ALL TASTE THE SAME.
ANY LAST WORDS, RED?
SWAK
FEISTY, RIGHT TILL THE END---

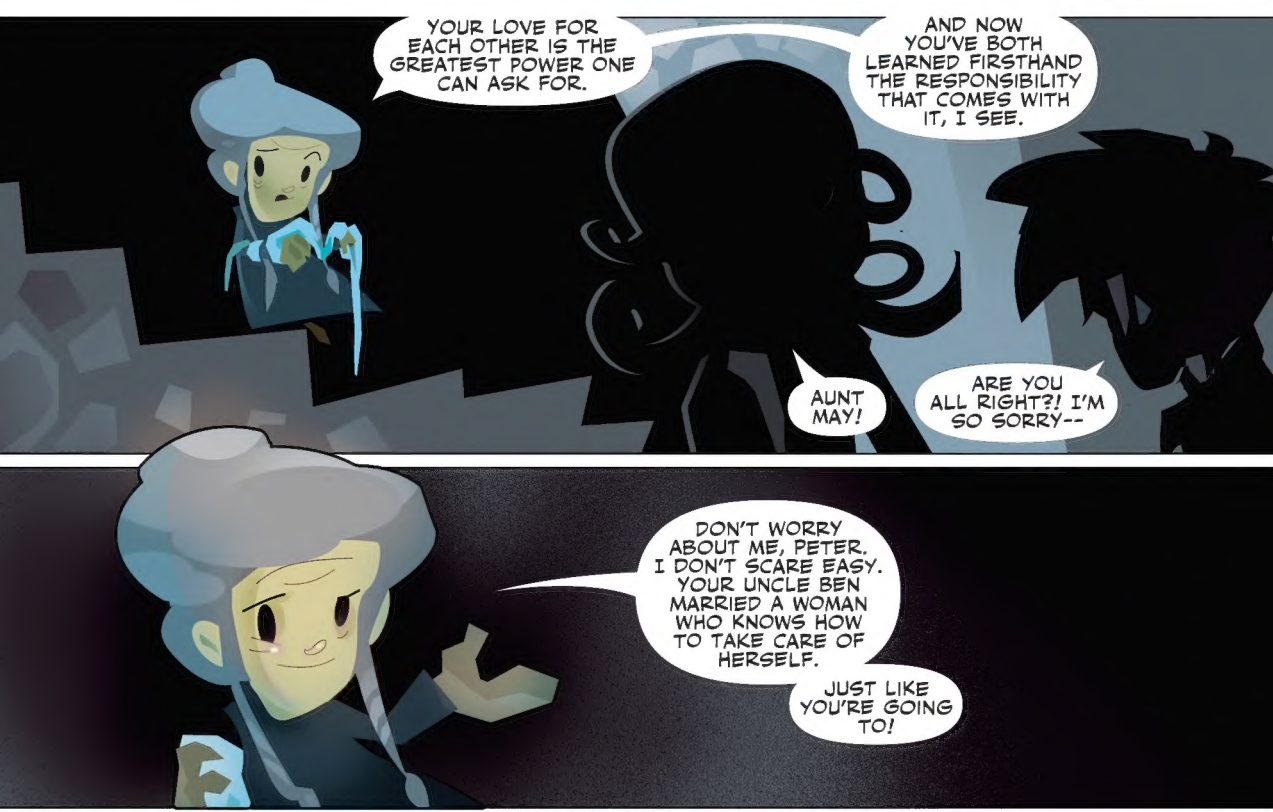
WUMP
TOK TOK TOK TOK TOK
WHAT IN THE--?!
COULD IT BE HIM? THE SPIDER...?!
YOU'RE IN FOR IT NOW, WOLF! HE'S COME FOR YOU!!
WHO--?!
IT'S HIM!! IT'S THE SPID--
SHRSH
PETER?!

LET HER GO!
SWWIIISH
=HUUURK=
YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO YOUR BOSS, PARKER! YOU CAN BARELY LIFT AN AXE.
YOU'D BE HOPELESS AS A CRIME FIGHTER!
OH, YEAH...?
THWAAK
AOOWRR!!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MJ? DID HE HURT YOU OR AUNT MAY?
NO, MAY'S SAFE UPSTAIRS. ME TOO, THANKS TO YOU. HOW DID YOU--?!
I'M NOT SURE. I SENSED SOMETHING WAS WRONG AND RAN HOME, BUT THE DOOR WAS LOCKED.
LOOKS LIKE MY INSTINCTS WERE RIGHT--
LOOK OUT!!
I'LL KILL YOU!!
MJ, GET MY AXE!
ALRIGHT, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF--
YOU CAN DO THIS!
WE CAN DO THIS!!
YOU'RE RIGHT!

TOGETHER NOW?
ALWAYS.
THWAM

OH, PETER...
I LOVE YOU, MARY JANE!
I'M SO PROUD OF YOU. I ALWAYS WILL BE, PETER.
NOTHING WILL MAKE ME HAPPIER THAN BECOMING MRS. PARKER!
WITHOUT YOU AND YOUR SUPPORT, I'M NOTHING, MARY JANE.
YOUR NAME MIGHT CHANGE, BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO! I LOVE YOU JUST THE WAY YOU ARE.


YOUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER IS THE GREATEST POWER ONE CAN ASK FOR.
AND NOW YOU'VE BOTH LEARNED FIRSTHAND THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH IT, I SEE.
AUNT MAY!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?! I'M SO SORRY--
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, PETER. I DON'T SCARE EASY. YOUR UNCLE BEN MARRIED A WOMAN WHO KNOWS HOW TO TAKE CARE OF HERSELF.
JUST LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO!

YOU'D BEST GO FETCH THE WOODCUTTERS TO COME AND CLEAN UP THIS MESS. HOPEFULLY, WHAT YOU BOTH DID WILL SERVE AS A GOOD EXAMPLE TO FOLKS AROUND HERE.
PEOPLE NEED TO STOP LIVING IN THE SHADOWS AND COME OUT AND CONFRONT THEIR FEARS!
"STOP LIVING IN THE SHADOWS"...
THIS JUST MIGHT COME IN HANDY SOMEDAY.

Off the Beaten Path

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Happily ever after...?